

July 31, 2001

Cosponsor H.R. 2074, the End Racial Profiling Act of 2001

Dear Colleague:

Please join us as cosponsors of the bipartisan End Racial Profiling Act of 2001 (H.R. 2074). Both the President and Attorney General have called for a ban on the practice of racial profiling, and there is near unanimous agreement on all sides of the political spectrum that the time has come for federal action.

Racial profiling not only undermines fundamental constitutional rights, it undermines the trust essential to effective law enforcement. Since racial profiling legislation was first introduced by Rep. Conyers in the 105th Congress, the pervasive nature of racial profiling has gone from anecdote and theory to well-documented fact. Data collected from New Jersey, Maryland, Texas, Pennsylvania, Florida, Illinois, Ohio, New York and Massachusetts show beyond a shadow of a doubt that African-Americans and Hispanics are being stopped for routine traffic violations far in excess of their share of the population or even the rate at which such populations are accused of criminal conduct. A recent Justice Department report found that although African-Americans and Hispanics are more likely to be stopped and searched by law enforcement, they are much less likely to be found in possession of contraband.

Although the vast majority of law enforcement agents nationwide discharge their duties professionally and without bias, we as a nation should not tolerate discrimination by a small minority of police officials. Racial profiling is a double-barreled assault on our social fabric. Nearly every young African-American and Hispanic male has been subjected to racial profiling or has a family member or close friend who has been a victim of this injustice. Racial profiling sends the message to young African-Americans, Hispanics and other minorities that the criminal justice system, and therefore the system at large, belittles their worth. More broadly, it causes a breakdown of the trust on which community policing depends. Unless that trust is built and nurtured, the police cannot do an effective job of protecting our communities and it makes an already difficult a job more dangerous.

Our legislation is designed to eliminate racial profiling by addressing the policies and procedures underlying the practice. First, the bill prohibits racial profiling, enforceable by injunctive relief. Second, we condition federal law enforcement grants to state and local governments on their adoption of policies that prohibit racial profiling. Third, we provide state and local police with the grant money they have said is necessary to train and modernize their police departments. Finally, the legislation provides for periodic reports by the Attorney General to assess the nature of any ongoing racial profiling.

If you would like to cosponsor or for more information on the legislation, please call Keenan Keller with Rep. Conyers at 5-6906 or Sarah Rittling with Rep. Shays at 5-5541.

s/John Conyers, Jr. Member of Congress	s/Christopher Shays Member of Congress	s/Fortney “Pete” Stark Member of Congress
s/Constance Morella Member of Congress	s/Donald M. Payne Member of Congress	s/Jose E. Serrano Member of Congress
s/James T. Walsh Member of Congress	s/James C. Greenwood Member of Congress	s/Robert Menendez Member of Congress
s/Robert C. Scott Member of Congress	s/David Wu Member of Congress	s/Timothy V. Johnson Member of Congress